



St Clement's Catholic Primary School

**Reading Workshop
January 2015**

At all levels, learning English is about learning to use language to express, explore and communicate our thoughts, ideas and feelings with others.

- We do this through speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Talking to your child is crucial in helping children to make progress in all aspects of English
- Questioning, prompting, responding (whether the focus is on reading, writing, speaking or listening) are all important in helping your child to build on what they can already do.

As the afternoon light started to fade, the cow stopped eating grass, stood instead with its head over the gate and gazed expectantly down the lane.

Types of questioning

As the afternoon light started to fade, the cow stopped eating grass, stood instead with its head over the gate and gazed expectantly down the lane.

1. How light was it?

A: The afternoon light was starting to fade

This is a LITERAL question. We can find the answer directly in the text. To answer it well we need to read the text very carefully and find the exact words that tell us the answer.

As the afternoon light started to fade, the cow stopped eating grass, stood instead with its head over the gate and gazed expectantly down the lane.

2. What three things did the cow do?

A: The cow stopped eating grass, stood with its head over the gate and gazed down the lane.

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As the afternoon light started to fade, the cow stopped eating grass, stood instead with its head over the gate and gazed expectantly down the lane.

3. When did this happen?

A: It was late in the afternoon in winter.

Evidence: We know that it was afternoon and the light was starting to fade. Light does not usually fade at the beginning or middle of the afternoon, so it must be the end of the afternoon. In this country, light tends to fade in the afternoon in winter, otherwise it stays light until what we would call evening.

This is a DEDUCTIVE question. The text does not actually tell us. But we can work out the answer directly from information the text gives us. To answer it well we need to read the text very carefully and work things out from the information we are given (but not make things up of our own).

As the afternoon light started to fade, the cow stopped eating grass, stood instead with its head over the gate and gazed expectantly down the lane.

4. Where was the cow?

A: The cow was probably in a field (possibly adding, on a farm and/or near a lane).

Evidence: We know there was grass and a gate, and it had a cow in, so it was almost certainly some sort of farm field.

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5. How do you think the cow might have been feeling?

A: It was probably not hungry any more. It was being patient, but was wanting something to happen. Evidence: We know that the cow stopped eating grass. This suggests that it might not have been hungry any more. It stood still with its head over the gate. This might suggest that it is being patient. It is gazing expectantly down the lane so it seems to be wanting something to happen. This is an INFERENTIAL question. The text does not actually tell us. But we can work out the answer by considering the hints and clues in the text in the light of our own knowledge and experience.

To answer it well we need to read the text very carefully and draw conclusions of our own from the hints and clues we are given (but not completely make things up, or jump to conclusions not supported by the text).

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6. What do you think the cow was expecting?

A:It was probably expecting someone (the farmer?) to take it in for milking. EVIDENCE: we know the cow was waiting by the gate for something to happen. We could infer that this time of the day could be milking time, although not certain.

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To answer it well we need to read the text very carefully and draw conclusions of our own from the hints and clues we are given (but not completely make things up, or jump to conclusions not supported by the text).

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7. What devices does the author use to give so much information in a single sentence?

A: The author gives information about the time by describing the light (in an introductory subordinate clause). In a complex sentence, the author tells us several things the cow does, but also implies what it is thinking and feeling by the words chosen (e.g. “stopped eating”, “stood”, “with its head over the gate”, “gazed” and “expectantly”). The writer shows us, as well as tells us, what is happening.

This is an AUTHORIAL INTENT question: what the writer has done and why. To answer it well we need to read the text very carefully and try to put ourselves in the writer’s place (i.e. ‘read like a writer’). We need to think about what the writer was trying to communicate and how he/she went about doing it.

Reading

A few suggestions as to how you can help your child make further progress in reading.

Ensure they have:

- Access to books, magazines and newspapers from home, school and library
- Somewhere quiet to read
- Time to read regularly
- Opportunity to see you as a reader-reading, choosing books, going to the library, talking about what you read

- **Read to them** and take turns with them in reading a section each of the text, supporting and prompting their reading in positive ways.
- Talk with them about the books they read:
 - ✓ Their favourite part or character and your favourite part.
 - ✓ How the illustrations support the story.
 - ✓ Their favourite author.
 - ✓ What makes a book different from (or similar to) others they have read.

- Talk about the meaning of what they have read. Ask them, for example to explain:
 - ✓ How they know that X is the villain or Y the heroine.
 - ✓ Why they like or dislike a particular character.
 - ✓ What will happen next- and why they think so.
 - ✓ A character's actions or motives.

- Help them to think about the writer behind the text, for example:
 - Why they chose the language they did?
 - Why they organised the text in that way?
 - What effect they hoped to have on the reader?
- When looking for information in print or on-screen, encourage them to scan ahead and think about how helpful the text is, whether it is a biased or reliable source.

- When they talk about their reading, encourage them to refer to evidence in the text that will support their views.
- Give them regular opportunities to make their choices in what they read at home, for example, visits to the library, magazines that cover out of school interests.
- Encourage them to develop their response to a text in more detail, for example, ask them to tell you how their feelings towards a character at different points in a story.
- Talk with them about the writer's choice of language, for example, ask them to choose a section they think is good and explain why they think it works well.